

Seals Losing Money, But Crowds on Rise

MAR 17 1976

By JOHN PORTER

The season will end too soon for the Seals' box office and center Wayne Merrick, but for different reasons.

The team is expected to lose about \$1.5 million this season, even though attendance is on the rise. More than 5,000 are expected for tonight's 8 o'clock game against the Buffalo Sabres at the Arena and some 10,000 this Friday for Montreal.

That adds up to an all-time attendance record for the Seals.

Merrick could set a record or two, but he'll miss five games without being injured.

When St. Louis traded him to the Seals earlier this season, the Blues had played five fewer games because of his irregular schedule.

"I was thinking about that," said Merrick, rubbing his chin. "I'd sure like to have those five games. I might score a few more goals."

One of the goals the Seals set for this month is .500 hockey. They're three points below that.

"Teams like Buffalo and Montreal play every game as if it were the ONLY game," said Merrick, who leads the Seals with 30 goals. "That's the way we should play."

The Seals haven't beaten three teams this season: the champion Philadelphia Flyers, Buffalo and Montreal.

Last season's record home attendance of 246,879 and the record average of 6,225 set in 1969-70 will fall.

The Seals have drawn 232,224 for an average of 6,830, so

far. Team officials expect two or three more crowds around the 10,000 mark and hope to finish with at least 275,000 this season.

That's just 5,000 fans short of a 7,000 average compared to their 6,100 from last year.

If former U.S. Olympic goalie Jim Warden is called up for a game or two, the gate might go up.

One problem, though. He's given up 16 goals in six periods while playing for Salt Lake City.

NOTES: Defenseman Len Frig underwent knee surgery Monday...Captain Bob Stewart is expected to play tonight with a splint on his injured finger...Rick Hampton has been on the ice for half of the Seals' goals scored this season.

Seals to Lose a Million Dollars?

JAN - 1 1976

Professional hockey's outlook for the new year appears to be bright red.

According to an unattributed report in a Toronto newspaper, 17 of the 32 clubs that comprise the National Hockey League and World Hockey Association are encountering financial difficulties.

The Globe and Mail said 10 of the 14 teams in the WHA will incur losses adding up to \$7.25 million this season and projected a figure of \$4.4 million for seven NHL teams.

The losses forecast by the newspaper included \$1 million

for the California Golden Seals and \$250,000 for the Detroit Red Wings, one of the NHL's six pre-expansion teams.

The story said the big WHA loser would be Toronto, which would drop more than \$2 million if its attendance maintains the present average of 6,600. The Toros must average 10,000 to break even.

"The Globe and Mail doesn't know what it's talking about," said NHL President Clarence Campbell.

Neither Ben Hatskin, the WHA's chief executive, nor

Bud Poile, vice-president in charge of hockey operations, was available for comment. They were reported to be in San Diego, apparently to check further with the Mariner franchise which the newspaper said will lose \$1 million this season.

The Minnesota Fighting Saints, who have lost \$4.9 million in the last three years, failed to meet their \$140,000 semi-monthly payroll yesterday. However, the players voted to continue playing while attempts to raise new funds continue. The club had to

borrow \$200,000 to meet the two previous payments.

Some WHA officials have said the league would be stronger if Minnesota and two or three other teams reported to be in trouble would fold.

Had the Fighting Saints folded, they would have become the 14th professional franchise to suffer that fate since mid-October. The 10-team World Football League and three of the 10 franchises in the American Basketball Association have gone under in the past 2½ months.

The paper's projected losses for the NHL are \$1 million for the Seals; Kansas City Scouts, Washington Capitals and Minnesota North Stars, \$750,000 each; Pittsburgh Penguins, \$500,000; Atlanta Flames, \$400,000, and the Red Wings, \$250,000.

The WHA breakdown in addition to the Toros is Denver Spurs and Mariners, \$1 million each; Cleveland Crusaders, \$750,000; Phoenix Roadrunners, Edmonton Oilers and Calgary Cowboys, \$500,000 each; Cincinnati Stingers and

Fighting Saints, \$400,000 each, and Indianapolis Racers, \$200,000.

A spokesman at the WHA's head office said he had no idea where the newspaper got its figures because the only league officials allowed to discuss the subject—Hatskin and Poile—have been traveling since Christmas.

Another problem facing the Saints is that they are overdue on rent payments and have been given until mid-January to produce the money.

Associated Press

Rangers Fall, 6-4

Seals Shoot for All-Time Mark

FEB 26 1976

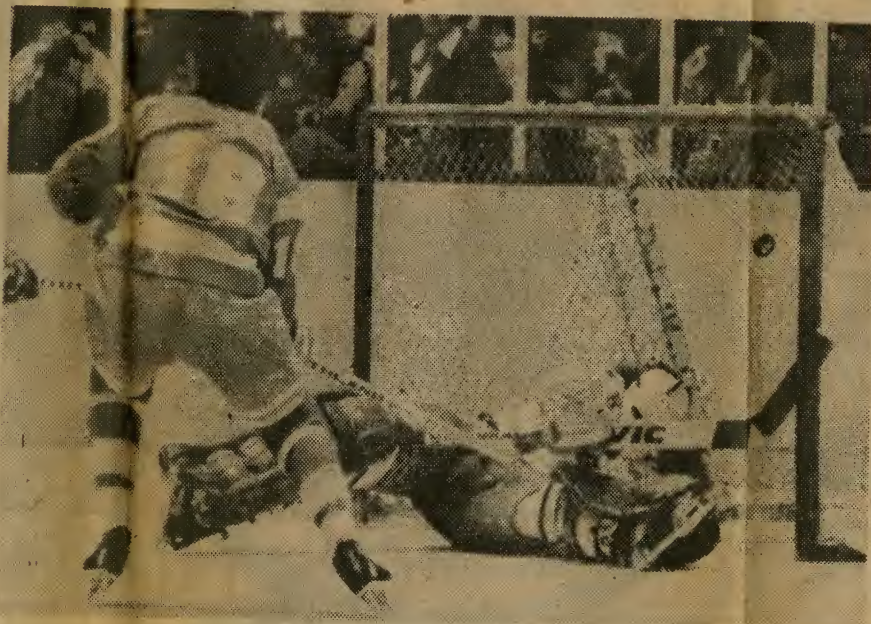
Special to The Tribune

DETROIT—The rowdy Seals can achieve an all-time club record of three successive road victories tonight at The Olympiad.

The Detroit Red Wings, who staggered home from a 10-0 bludgeoning in Toronto last night, are the lone obstacle to yet another of the many marks that the young Seals have been establishing in recent days.

Coach Jack Evans' crew captured the second-ever Seal triumph in Madison Square Garden last night when Fred Ahern slapped home a tie-breaking goal with 2:47 remaining in a brawl-filled 6-4 beating of the New York Rangers.

The victory supplied the Seals with their first-ever season-series domination of the once-powerful Broadway Blues, who slipped to a 23-33-6 mark, shockingly even behind the 23-32-7 record of the re-



John Davidson can't stop Seals' Fred Ahern from scoring winning goal

AP Laserphoto

charged Seals. The Seals beat them three of four times.

The Seals blew a 4-1 lead, which was established largely on the second hat trick of the season by Al MacAdam, when Ron Greschner's power play goal late in the second period and rapid-fire scores by ex-Seal Carol Vadnais and Wayne Dillon 50 seconds apart early in the final period tied the score.

MacAdam's goals tied him for the club lead with Wayne Merrick at 27.

The teams battled through the final period until Seal Jim Moxey took the puck from New York's Steve Vickers behind the Ranger goal and passed to Dave Gardner, who fed Ahern all alone in front. The rookie flicked the puck over goalie John Davidson.

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For Wins on Road

Cont. from 1st Sports Page.

Seals goalie Gary Simmons, who was brilliant in the nets except for the Ranger scoring flurry, shut down the frustrated New Yorkers in the final minutes and defenseman Bob Stewart added an empty-net goal with six seconds remaining.

There were eight major fights during the game, in which New York rookie Dave Maloney set a team record with 33 penalty minutes in his 14th professional game, breaking the team mark of 32 set by Greg Polis last season. Maloney was involved in three of the fights and received a game misconduct penalty at 13:18 of the final period.

The Seals' George Pesut was banished from the game at the same time. Pesut established a 1976 Seal high with 26 minutes himself, busting Ahern's best of 17 at Washington Jan. 2, but falling short of Mike Christie's all-time mark of 30 last season on Oct. 25 in Philadelphia.

Charlie Simmer of the Seals also received a game misconduct in the second period when he was the third man into a fight between Maloney and Pesut, who else?

The Rangers held an 18-1-2 edge on the Seals at the Garden since the Californians entered the National Hockey

League in 1967, the only previous victory by the Seals a 7-2 triumph on March 12, 1972.

5 NY

FIRST PERIOD

- 1 0 Seals Klassen (6:33)
- (Pesut, Simmer) 7:33
- 2 0 Seals MacAdam (25:43)
- (Murdoch) 13:2
- Penalties—Maloney, N.Y., 2:19
- Klassen, Seals, 11:31; Vadnais, N.Y., 11:31; Greschner, N.Y., 20:00
- Shots on goal—New York 12, Seals 7.

SECOND PERIOD

- 2 1 New York Fairbairn (12:43)
- (Tkaczuk) 3:14
- 3 1 Seals MacAdam (26:43)
- (Murdoch, Jacobs) 4:37
- 4 1 Seals MacAdam (27:15)
- (Murdoch) 15:27
- 4 2 New York Greschner (4:18)
- (Esposito, Vadnais) 18:47
- Penalties—Maloney, N.Y., 2:43; Pesut, Seals, double minor, 6:48; Simmer, Seals, game misconduct, 6:48; Maloney, N.Y., minor-major, 6:48; Hampton, Seals, 9:53; Seals bench (served by MacAdam), 11:01; Pesut, Seals, minor-major, 17:35; Maloney, N.Y., major, 17:35; Girard, Seals, major, 19:05; Greschner, N.Y., minor-major, 19:05; Merrick, Seals, 20:00
- Shots on goal—New York 14, Seals 11.

THIRD PERIOD

- 4 3 New York Vadnais (14:00)
- (Vickers, Polis) 2:06
- 4 4 New York Dillon (17:00)
- (Gilbert, Vickers) 2:56
- 5 4 Seals Ahern (10:13)
- (Gardner, Moxey) 17:10
- 6 4 Seals Stewart (4:19)
- (Unassisted) 19:54
- Penalties—Ahern, Seals, 4:55; Moxey, Seals, double minor, 8:52; Vadnais, N.Y., double minor, 8:52; Pesut, Seals, major-game misconduct, 13:18; Maloney, N.Y., minor-major, game misconduct, 13:18; New York bench (served by Gilbert), 17:13; Girard, Seals, major, 17:31; Greschner, N.Y., double minor, 17:31; Moxey, Seals, major, 17:34; Polis, N.Y., major, 17:34; Bednarski, N.Y., major, 17:34
- Shots on goal—New York 12, Seals 10.
- Total shots on goal—New York 38, Seals 28.
- Goalies—Seals, Simmons; New York, Davidson
- Attendance—17,500.